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Congress of the United States
 Committee on Foreign Affairs 8-0946/A

House of Representatives
 Washington, D.C. 20515

8 July 1981

The Honorable
 William Casey
 Director
 Central Intelligence Agency
 Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Casey:

Thank you for your letter of May 30, 1981 offering to have appropriate analysts from the National Foreign Assessments Center brief me on the Afghan freedom fighters and related matters. The Administration has recently informed us that they will not be ready to testify on their proposed military and economic assistance program for Pakistan for several more weeks. Once they are prepared to testify I will be asking the Agency to brief Members of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee on a broad range of political and economic issues involving Southwest Asia, and this will be very helpful to us.

However, I am puzzled and disappointed by your response to my request for a briefing on the special activities of the Agency -- if any -- in support of the freedom fighters. I have long been aware of the need for secrecy and security regarding covert activities, and supported the modification of the Hughes-Ryan Amendment eliminating the need to brief so many Committees on a regular basis. The intent of Congress when it approved this modification was not, however, to cut off Members from other Committees responsible for foreign affairs or national defense from being briefed on such matters when such information was necessary for them to carry out their legislative responsibilities. Rather it was, in the words of Chairman Zablocki during the floor debate of May 28, 1980, to centralize the oversight function of the House in the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, which is the only Committee that need receive "prompt prior notification of such operations."

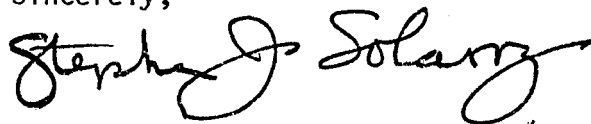
I am not seeking to exercise an oversight responsibility for the entire area under the jurisdiction of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, nor am I complaining of not receiving "prompt prior notification" of any operations. That is the responsibility of the Intelligence Committee. But if I am to fulfill my legislative responsibilities when the Pakistan aid program is considered, I do need a briefing on the special activities of the Agency -- if any -- in support of the Afghan freedom fighters, as well as the Pakistani role and attitude on this issue.

You suggest that I ask Chairman Zablocki or Congressman Hamilton, Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee who also serve on the Intelligence Committee, for information on these matters. This would be an unsatisfactory procedure. It would only be possible to ask the kind of questions about these matters that need to be answered from someone familiar with such activities, and knowledgeable about what could be done as well as what is being done. My intention, I want to stress, is not to probe into sources and methods, but rather to learn about policies and capabilities.

As you said in your letter, there is nothing in the law that prohibits such briefings by the Agency. From my participation in the floor debate on the modification of Hughes-Ryan, I know that Congress did not intend to terminate such briefings when they were needed for specific legislative purposes as distinct from general oversight activities. Chairman Boland and other Members of the Intelligence Committee agree that it would be entirely appropriate for the Agency to brief me on such matters.

Therefore, I request that you arrange to brief me and Congressman Joel Pritchard, who has been named ranking minority Member of the Subcommittee, as soon as appropriate arrangements can be made.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Solarz
Chairman
Subcommittee on Asian
and Pacific Affairs

cc: Honorable Joel Pritchard
SJS/wbs